

**FOR: THE CREATION OF THE INDIANA COMMISSION FOR EARLY  
LEARNING & SCHOOL READINESS**

**TO ALL TO WHOM THESE PRESENTS MAY COME, GREETINGS:**

**WHEREAS**, all children deserve quality early learning experiences from birth to age six to ensure that they are well prepared to succeed in the K-12 education system; and

**WHEREAS**, extensive brain research has established that brain development during the first years of life has a significant impact on later learning and intellectual growth; and

**WHEREAS**, scientific evidence supports a clear and compelling connection between the quality of a child's early learning experiences and later success in school and life; and

**WHEREAS**, parents are, and always will be, their children's first and most important teachers. As such, parents deserve to have the latest information on what they can do to promote healthy brain development in their infants and children; and

**WHEREAS**, parents must be supported in their efforts to provide quality care and learning opportunities for their children; and

**WHEREAS**, high-quality early childhood care and education is a good economic investment because children who have participated in high-quality pre-Kindergarten programs demonstrate higher math and reading scores, stronger learning skills, increased creativity, better school attendance, improved health, and greater involvement by parents in elementary school. Further, these children are less likely to drop out of school, less likely to repeat grades, less likely to need special education, and less likely to get in trouble with the law; and

**WHEREAS**, Indiana's policymakers and early education experts must work together to build on Indiana's successful early learning and wellness initiatives to ensure that every Hoosier child receives quality early learning experiences; and

**WHEREAS**, the goal of the Early Learning and School Readiness Commission is to fulfill the vision of a statewide, high-quality, accessible and comprehensive early learning and school readiness system to benefit all young children whose parents choose to access to the system.

**NOW THEREFORE**, I, Joseph E. Kernan, by virtue of the authority vested in me as Governor of the State of Indiana by the Constitution and laws of this state, do hereby

**ORDER** that:

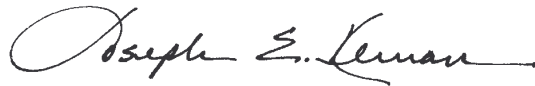
1. The Indiana Commission for Early Learning and School Readiness is established.
2. The Commission shall consist of no more than 32 members, who shall be appointed by and serve at the pleasure of the Governor. Two members of the Commission as identified by the Chair shall serve as ex-officio members of the Indiana Education Roundtable. The Commission membership shall include, but is not limited to, the following:
  - A member appointed by the Governor, who shall serve as co-chair;
  - The State Superintendent of Public Instruction, who shall serve as co-chair;
  - Two (2) members of the Senate, not more than one (1) of whom may be members of the same political party.

- Two (2) members of the House of Representatives, not more than one (1) of whom may be members of the same political party.
  - A representative of institutions of higher education with focus on Early Childhood Education;
  - A public school superintendent of a district with a full-day kindergarten program and/or early learning initiative;
  - A public school principal of a school with a full-day kindergarten program and/or early learning initiative;
  - A member representing a local school board;
  - A teacher in a full-day kindergarten program;
  - A Director of a preschool cooperative and/or public early learning center;
  - A director of a child care center licensed in the State of Indiana;
  - A family/home care provider;
  - A Head Start provider;
  - A child development specialist/ researcher;
  - A curriculum development specialist;
  - A pediatrician;
  - A member representing disabled children;
  - The chair of the Indiana Child Care Fund;
  - The executive director of the Indiana Association for the Education of Young Children (IAEYC);
  - At least one member representing parents;
  - At least one member representing business and community;
  - The state budget director, who shall serve as a non-voting member;
  - The secretary of the Family and Social Services Administration, who shall serve as a non-voting member;
  - The commissioner of the State Department of Health, who shall serve as a non-voting member;
  - The commissioner of the Department of Correction, who shall serve as a non-voting member;
  - The executive director, Commission on Hispanic/Latino Affairs, who shall serve as a non-voting member; and
  - The director of the Division of Special Learners for the Indiana Department of Education, who shall serve as a non-voting member.
3. Members shall be appointed to two-year terms. Members shall serve on a voluntary unpaid basis.
  4. The Commission shall advise the Governor and the Superintendent of Public Instruction on the most effective policy direction and methods to improve the quality, coordination, delivery of and access to early education and school readiness services, including child care (including home and center-based), preschool and family support services and programs.

5. The Commission shall focus on implementation strategies for the early learning and school readiness goals of the "*P-16 Plan for Improving Student Achievement*" as adopted by the Indiana Education Roundtable, including ways to:
  - Make sure every four-year-old child has access to high quality pre-kindergarten programs that help prepare them for success in school;
  - Involve parents in the planning and implementation of all early learning and school readiness efforts;
  - Provide parents, pediatricians, and others who work with children with information regarding cognitive (brain) development and the importance of reading to infants and children;
  - Guarantee access to appropriate health screenings and high-quality developmental checkups for all children birth to age 7;
  - Focus on reading;
  - Ask Indiana employers to invest in the state's future workforce by providing or partnering to provide high-quality child care and pre-kindergarten options for employees;
  - Make high quality full-day kindergarten available for all children;
6. The Commission shall develop an inventory of the early learning and school readiness services for children birth to age six and resources now available through state agencies, local agencies and private organizations. Based on that inventory of state resources, the Commission shall recommend to the Governor and the Superintendent of Public Instruction areas in which:
  - Services and resources can be used more effectively and efficiently;
  - Quality programming can be established and promoted;
  - Enhanced collaboration and communication is needed; and
  - Services and resources should be reorganized either through administrative or legislative action.
7. The Commission shall identify and recommend methods to strengthen the transition between early learning programs for children below the age of school entry and the K-12 education system.
8. The Commission shall identify and recommend methods to strengthen the communication with parents, pediatricians and others who work with children about the critical role of early learning and school readiness.
9. The Commission shall identify and recommend methods to measure quality, availability and effectiveness of early education and school readiness programs in Indiana. The costs associated with this effort shall also be included.
10. In their work, the Commission shall identify and build on successful initiatives currently in place to integrate early childhood services and expand collaborative partnerships with business, education, human services, health, mental health, and others to support early learning.
11. The Commission shall identify and build on successful initiatives currently in place to ensure that parents acquire the skills needed to be successful as their child's first teachers and focus on nationally accepted standards for parent involvement. Further, the Commission shall identify strategies to improve and increase parent involvement in pre-Kindergarten education, as well as at the Kindergarten level.
12. The Commission shall identify those special efforts and resources needed in low-income and/or rural areas of the state to ensure availability of quality early education and school readiness.

13. In order to carry out its work, the Commission shall meet no fewer than six times per year and shall strive to include all interested members of the public, along with early education and school readiness advocacy groups, in its deliberations.
14. The Commission shall issue a report on its initial work to the Governor and the Superintendent of Public Instruction no later than December 31, 2004 and thereafter on an annual basis. The reports of the Commission shall be a public record.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I, Joseph E. Kernan,  
have hereunto set my hand and caused to be  
affixed the Great Seal of the State of Indiana  
on this 11th day of May 2004.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Joseph E. Kernan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

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Joseph E. Kernan  
Governor of Indiana

ATTEST: Todd Rokita  
Secretary of State